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ABSTRACT

Two issues were investigated: (1) Are parents able to recognize creativity in their children? and (2) Are teachers able to recognize creativity in their pupils? Subjects were 68 elementary school children, their parents, and teachers. The children attended 22 schools, grades 1-4. Creativity was assessed by the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking and creativity ratings obtained from parents and teachers. Findings indicated that parents were unable to recognize any of the creativity components their children possess. Teachers were able to recognize creativity components to some degree. In addition, parent and teacher opinions as to the childrens' creativity were positively correlated to a small degree. An awareness of the development of creative thinking abilities by parents and teachers would be beneficial in that: children could understand and experience themselves to a greater extent: new outlets for expression might be provided: and inner processes for stimulation could be developed. (Author/RL)

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PARENTS AND TEACHERS RATINGS OF CREATIVITY

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Two issues were investigated: 1) Are parents able to recognize creativity in their children? and 2) Are teachers able to recognize creativity in their pupils? Subjects were 68 elementary school children ranging in age from 6-9 to 9-10, their parents and teachers. The children attended 22 elementary schools, grades one through four. Creativity was assessed by the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking and creativity ratings obtained from parents and teachers. Findings indicated that parents were unable to recognize any of the creativity components their children possess. Teachers were able to recognize creativity components to some degree. In addition, parent and teacher opinions as to the childrens' creativity were positively correlated to a small degree.

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One theorist on creativity states that a responsive environment is needed for the development of creative abilities. A responsive environment is defined as one that provides alert, sensitive guidance and freedom from criticism or ridicule (Torrance, 1965). In an alert, sensitive environment, one would expect adults to be aware of creative behaviors and abilities of children. Therefore, two goals of this research were to investigate whether adults in two environments (home and school) recognize the creative abilities of children.

Researchers concerned with creativity and the home environment have concentrated their attention on the variables of parental values, parental attitudes, child rearing practices, parental control, parental authoritarianism and children's perceptions of their parents. However, research focusing on parent perception of a child's creative abilities related to the child's measured creativity is lacking.

In investigating whether creative abilities are recognized in the school environment, teacher ratings or nominations have been used. The accuracy of teacher judgment has been explored at all academic levels. The findings are somewhat inconsistent, but largely teachers have been found to be inaccurate in their assessments (Torrance, 1962; Guilford, 1967; Yamamoto, 1964; Piers, Daniels & Quackenbush, 1960; Merrifield, Gardner & Cox, 1964; Hamilton, 1970; Scharff, 1973; Rittmayer, 1968; Treffinger, Feldhusen & Thomas, 1970; Klausmeier, Harris & Ethnathios, 1962; Nutall, 1969; and Wirth, 1966). This finding persists even after

instruction, training and information on creative thinking has been provided (Duplisea, 1969; Stauts, 1973; and Finkle, 1976).

Inaccurate teacher ratings have been found to correlate with variables such as reading achievement (Stauts, 1973), intelligence (Nuttall, 1969; Treffinger, Feldhusen & Thomas, 1970), grades, achievement and socio-economic measures (Nuttall, 1969).

In contrast, accurate teacher assessments of creative abilities have been found by Treffinger & Ripple (1970); Williams (1966); Feldhusen & Denny (1965); Wallen & Stevenson (1960); and Baker (1973).

METHOD

SUBJECTS

All 68 subjects belonged to upper-middle class white families. They ranged in age from 6-9 to 9-10. Mean age for females (n=33) was 8-7; mean age for males (n=35) was 8-5. The children attended 22 local elementary schools: three were in the first grade, 15 in the second grade, 26 in the third grade, and 24 in the fourth grade.

INSTRUMENTS

Largely because of adequate reliability and validity, the verbal part of the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) entitled, "Thinking Creatively with Words, Form A" was chosen for this research. The verbal part of the TTCT typically yields a fluency, flexibility, and originality

score for each subject. Composite scores can also be obtained by summing the subscale scores, although this practice is generally not recommended in the Norms Technical Manual (1974).

Test-retest reliabilities reported in the Norms-Technical Manual (1974) were based on earlier forms of tasks forming the verbal and figural test forms. Reliability coefficients for verbal sections of the TTCT range from .35 to .93 depending upon the testing situation (such as time interval between testings) but are most often in the upper .70's to low 80's.

The manual also reports studies relevant to establishing the validity of the TTCT. However, TTCT scores are almost exclusively related to personality measures such as playfulness, attitudinal rigidity, social conformity, and value orientation. Little mention is made of the correlations between scores on the TTCT subscales and other verbal and nonverbal measures of creativity.

A Perception of Creative Thinking Questionnaire was designed for parent and teacher ratings of creativity. For the sake of clarity and consistency, an identical questionnaire was used for the two groups. Eight questions composed the scale, three dealt specifically with fluency, flexibility and originality. Definitions of the creativity components were provided and creative behaviors were illustrated. Children were ranked on a five-point behavioral-expression scale of always to never. For each subject, fluency, flexibility, originality and total creativity

scores were obtained separately from parents and teachers.

PROCEDURE

The data were collected in three phases. Upon receipt of the parental consent form, the first author met with the child and at least one parent in each subject's home. The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking entitled "Thinking Creatively with Words, Form A" was individually administered following procedures from the Norms Technical Manual (1974). A play-like atmosphere was maintained, and in each instance the child picked the particular testing location in the home. Time limits for each activity were observed. To minimize any distractions or interruptions in spontaneity, each testing session was tape recorded and transcribed at a later date. To avoid investigator bias and insure reliability the test booklets were forwarded to the publisher, Personnel Press, for scoring.

One month later, the Perception of Creative Thinking Questionnaire was mailed to the 68 parents. After completion of the questionnaire, the parents returned them to the researchers. Fifty-six of the forms were completed by the mother, five by the father, and seven by both mother and father.

Phase Three consisted of obtaining creativity ratings from each of the 68 teachers. These were collected at the same time as the parent ratings. Principals in the 22 schools were contacted and the research

explained. Next, the principals explained the research to the teachers and ask them to rate their pupils. The teachers were given two weeks time in which to rate the children and return the questionnaires to the researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the total sample (n=68), fluency, flexibility, originality and total creativity scores from the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking and the Parent Perception of Creative Thinking Questionnaire were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The Pearson r's were: fluency -0.01 (n=68); flexibility -0.13 (n=68); originality 0.09 (n=68); and total creativity -0.06 (n=68). None were significant at the .05 level. The findings indicate that parents were unable to identify any of the various components of creativity their children possess as defined by the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. It is doubtful that responsive home environments are provided to children whose parents are unable to recognize creative behaviors. It is probable that the expression of creativity may not be elicited, understood or reinforced in such homes.

Scores on the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking subscales were also correlated with the teacher perceptions from the Creative Thinking Questionnaire. Pearson r's were: fluency .21 (n=68); flexibility .29 (n=68); originality .27 (n=68); and total creativity .31 (n=68). All were significant at the .05 level. In reference to the total sample,

the findings would indicate that teachers were able, to a limited extent, to identify components of creativity in their pupils. Although all the correlations were small, all were significant at the .05 level and teacher ratings were on only a five-point scale.

This finding is supportive of accurate teacher judgments for creativity found by Treffinger & Ripple (1970); Williams (1966); Feldhusen & Denny (1965); Warren & Stevenson (1960) and Baker (1973). It is not supportive of observations by Torrance (1962); Guilford (1967); Yamamoto (1964); Piers, Daniels & Quackenbush (1960); Merrifield, Gardner and Cox (1964); Hamilton (1970); Scharff (1973); Rittmayer (1968); Treffinger, Feldhusen & Thomas (1970) that teachers are unable to recognize creativity in their pupils. The teachers in this sample were provided with an elaborate behavioral definition questionnaire on which to rate the children. It is possible that under these circumstances accurate judgments are made to some extent. This finding does not mean that teachers are familiar with the divergent thinking process or allow relaxed, dispersed periods for its development.

Parent and teacher ratings were also correlated to determine whether their ratings were in agreement. Pearson r's between the 68 ratings were: fluency .26 ($p < .05$); flexibility .20 ($p > .05$); originality .24 ($p < .05$). Again the correlations were small, however, there was some positive relationship between the ratings of the parents and teachers.

An awareness of the development of creative thinking abilities by

parents and teachers would be beneficial in that: (a) children could understand and experience themselves to a greater extent; (b) new outlets for expression might be provided; and (c) inner processes for stimulation could be developed.

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